

Texas Veterans Commission Meeting Minutes

**Second Quarterly Meeting (FY 2016)
February 10, 2016**

I. Call to order.

Chairman Eliseo Cantu called to order the 2nd Quarterly Commission Meeting of the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) at 9:00 a.m. on February 10, 2016 at the Brazos County Expo, Meeting Rooms 1 and 2, 5827 Leonard Road, Bryan, Texas 77807.

The following Commissioners, constituting a quorum were present:

Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Chairman
Jake Ellzey, Secretary
Richard A. McLeon, IV, Commissioner

Also present was Thomas P. Palladino, Executive Director.

MOTION: To excuse Vice Chairman James Scott and Commissioner, Daniel P. Moran from the Second Quarterly Meeting (FY 2016)

MADE BY: Secretary Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

Excused: Vice Chairman James Scott and Commissioner Daniel P. Moran

Also present: See the attached list.

Commissioner Richard McLeon led the opening Prayer. Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag was led by Secretary Jake Ellzey and Executive Director, Thomas Palladino led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag.

Chairman Cantu introduced the new Texas Veterans Commission staff members.

II. Public Comment.

Morgan Little, Chairman of the TX Coalition of Veterans Organizations made public comment requesting Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) support regarding changes to the current claims process for Mesothelioma and Asbestos Cancers. Mr. Little also requested the support of TVC regarding Military Absentee voting, which would change the current grace period from 5 to 8 days. Lastly, Mr. Little thanked TVC on the

participation in awarding the DMV a certificate of appreciation for the support to Veterans through the new Veteran License Plate.

III. Approve the Minutes of the 1st Quarterly Commission Meeting held on November 4, 2015.

The minutes for the 1st Quarterly Meeting held on November 4, 2015 were previously distributed to the Commissioners.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the First Quarterly Meeting held on November 4, 2015, with corrections.

MADE BY: Secretary Ellzey

SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon

ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

IV. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee.

Karen Meisel, General Counsel, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. The Advisory Committee attempted to hold the quarterly meeting, however due to attendance issues, a forum was not able to be conducted. Therefore, elections were not conducted. The committee will meet again prior to 3rd Quarterly Commission meeting with elections and a complete update on activities of the Veterans Communication Advisory Committee.

V. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee.

Stan Kurtz, Veterans Employment Services Operations Manager provided a summary of activities conducted by the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. Mr. Kurtz also announced that the Veterans Employment and Training Advisory Committee has appointed Jerry Eisenhower as Chairman and Steven Burke as Vice Chair.

VI. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Advisory Committee.

Charlie Catoe, Director of Fund for Veterans' Assistance, provided a summary of activities conducted by the Advisory Committee since its last report to the Commission. Specifically, The General Assistance 16B, 2016-2017 Veterans Mental Health, Veterans Treatment Court and Housing 4 Texas Heroes grant process. Also Mr. Catoe informed the Commission that FVA received 137 grant applications of which 80 applicants presented their projects to the committee. In February, the committee will be submitting individual recommendations to the FVA staff and in March 2016 will prepare funding recommendations to present to Texas Veterans Commission for approval. FVA Advisory Committee gained two new members, Dan Ball and Charles Wright who are fully engaged within the FVA Advisory Committee. Mr. Palladino asked a question regarding the new Chair of FVA Advisory Committee. Charlie informed the Commission that LaShondra Jones was elected as Chair and Perry Jeffries as the Vice Chair. However, due to conflicts, LaShondra Jones intends to resign her position and Mr. Jeffries will step in as Chair until another election is made in March.

VII. Report, presentation and/or action by representatives of the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee.

Laura Spain, Chair of the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee provided the report for the Veterans County Service Officer Advisory Committee. She stated she was re-elected as Chair of the committee and James Henderson as the Vice Chair. She addressed the lack of computers throughout the state and is working to gain computer systems for those County Service Officers who presently do not have a computer. She stated the TVC website is not in compliance in reference to training material for the County Veteran Service Officers. She stated the errors have been addressed and that the website errors are being corrected. Lastly, she discussed projected training plans for the County Veteran Service Officers.

VIII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Advisory Committees membership.

Cruz Montemayor, Deputy Executive Director, informed the Commission that the advisory committees continue to have vacancies, therefore the application process for selection of Committee membership will be re-opened and evaluated. Recommendations of selected individuals will be provided at the next Commission meeting for approval.

IX. Report, presentation and/or action by TVC Veterans Education regarding Veterans Coordinator Program.

Dr. Ralph Duval, Fernando (Fuzzy) Conejo and Pedro Saldaña, Veterans Education Regional Coordinators, provided a presentation to the Commission regarding the Veterans Coordinator Program. The respective Coordinators provided information on

the implementation and the progress of the TVC Education Veterans Coordinator Program throughout Texas in each of the four regions.

X. Update regarding proposal to establish a non-profit entity for the Texas Veterans Commission.

Cruz Montemayor, Deputy Executive Director, provided an oral presentation informing the commission that TVC is still exploring options and is not ready to present to the Commission at this time. Recommendations will be provided at the next Commission Meeting.

XI. Report, presentation and/or action to propose Amendments and New Agency Rules: Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 461, Veterans Education, Subchapter A, Exemption Program for Veterans and Their Dependents (The Hazlewood Act):

- §461.20. Definitions (amendment)
- §461.30. Hazlewood Act Exemption (amendment)
- §461.40. Veteran Eligibility (amendment)
- §461.50. Spouse's Eligibility (amendment)
- §461.60. Children's Eligibility (amendment)
- §461.70. Hazlewood Legacy Act Eligibility (amendment)
- §461.80. The Application (amendment)
- §461.90. Supporting Documentation for the Hazlewood Act Exemption Application (amendment)
- §461.100. Subsequent Hazlewood Exemption Award (amendment)
- §461.120. Reporting (amendment)
- §461.130. Records Retention by Institutions (new)

Charles Bryant, Program Specialist for Veterans Education, provided a report regarding the Proposed Amendments and New Agency Rules: Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 461, Veterans Education, Subchapter A, Exemption Program for Veterans and Their Dependents (The Hazlewood Act). Charles Bryant explained that each proposal was coordinated with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Legislative Budget Board, university systems, and the Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations.

MOTION: Approve the recommended Amendments and New Agency Rules: Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 461, Veterans Education, Subchapter A, Exemption Program for Veterans and Their Dependents (The Hazlewood Act):

- §461.20. Definitions (amendment)
- §461.30. Hazlewood Act Exemption (amendment)
- §461.40. Veteran Eligibility (amendment)
- §461.50. Spouse's Eligibility (amendment)
- §461.60. Children's Eligibility (amendment)

§461.70. Hazlewood Legacy Act Eligibility (amendment)
§461.80. The Application (amendment)
§461.90. Supporting Documentation for the Hazlewood Act Exemption
Application (amendment)
§461.100. Subsequent Hazlewood Exemption Award (amendment)
§461.120. Reporting (amendment)
§461.130. Records Retention by Institutions (new)

MADE BY: Secretary Ellzey
SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

****Commissioners asked for a five minute break. Meeting resumed at 10:00 a.m.**

XII. Report, presentation and/or action on Appropriation Year 2016 1st Quarter Operating Statement.

Michelle Nall, Chief Financial Officer, provided the Agency Summary regarding Appropriate Year 2016 1st Quarter Operating Statement. There were no issues and budget is on target at this time.

XIII. Report, presentation and/or action regarding acceptance of gifts.

Chip Osborne, Director of Resource Management provided the report on the acceptance of gifts. The Women Veterans Program has received a total of \$18,500 in gifts from various donors. The commission has required the program to make record of each gift card provided to Veterans as well as provide thank you letters to each donor.

MOTION: Approve acceptance of gifts presented and apply directly to Women Veterans Program.
MADE BY: Secretary Ellzey
SECONDED BY: Commissioner McLeon
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously

XIV. Report, presentation and/or action regarding Executive Director Report.

Thomas Palladino, Texas Veterans Commission Executive Director, provided a report on the agency's priorities and activities over the last quarter. Mr. Palladino addressed the letters in his report recognizing personnel in the field for their superb customer

service to our Veterans. Mr. Palladino further discussed our partnership and successes with VHA with our Veterans Healthcare Advocacy program which provides Veterans representation with healthcare issues. He further discussed all of his meetings and events he has attended during the quarter and will be attending this upcoming quarter to include the NASDVA Mid-Winter Conference. NASDVA has requested Texas Veterans Commission to participate in a work group to assist the VA with improvement of the VA Disability appeals process. TVC has provided recommendations and is hopeful the assistance will create reduction in the VA appeals backlog. Strategic Plan process is continuing which will be presented to the Commissioners in the spring. We are continuing the process of establishing My VA Communities.

XV. Agency Programs and Divisions:

The Commissioners reviewed the Quarterly Program Reports that were previously provided. Directors were provided the opportunity to brief the Commission on any new items or highlight significant items that occurred within their program or division.

- a. Shawn Deabay, Director of Program Operations, briefed the Commission on the successes of each program within Program Operations. Specifically Mr. Deabay discussed the audit of case management of Veterans Employment Services. Recommendations were provided to improve our case management system. Leadership has taken these recommendations and visited various offices throughout the state and provided training. The training has proved successful. Mr. Deabay also discussed the Red White and You events to prepare Veterans for hiring events. There were 49 workshops which 1,416 Veterans attended. Mr. Deabay called upon Tim Shatto to further discuss these events. Mr. Shatto addressed the Commissioners, and informed the commission on the successes of the program and future hiring events that TVC will be hosting. Secretary Ellzey has requested that claims change the reporting status of Performance Measure/Metrics to reflect numbers per region to better identify where the greatest delays in the process are located.
- b. Chip Osborne, Director of Resource Management, reported on major activities and accomplishments of each program. Mr. Osborne addressed the commission regarding FVA Cycles, and the potential for movement of Veterans Mental Health Service categories of the Clinical Counseling services and the Peer Delivery services back under the General Assistance Program. Mr. Osborne informed the Commission that there will be a complete brief for the Commissioners at the next scheduled Commission meeting. Mr. Osborne called upon Charles Catoe to address the Commission on activities of the Fund for Veterans' Assistance and the Grant Cycle Timelines and Status of current Grant applications.

- c. Edie Disler, Director of External Relations, reported on major activities and accomplishments by each program since the last Commission Meeting. Ms. Disler spoke of the successes of communications, MVPN activities regarding the continuation of the support and development of Justice Involved Veteran Program, Women Veterans Program to include TX Women Veterans Roll Call Events, Government Relations and Veterans Entrepreneur Program events.

XVI. Executive Session.

There was no Executive Session held.

XVII. Discussion and take possible action on the items considered in Executive Session.

There were no items to take action on.

XVIII. Discussion to set date, time, and location of next Commission meeting.


The Commission agreed for the 3rd Quarterly Commission Meeting of FY16 to be held on Wednesday May 4, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at the Stephen F. Austin Building Rm 170, 1700 N. Congress Ave, Austin, Texas 78701.

XIX. Adjournment.

Chairman Cantu recognized each Commissioner for closing statements. The Commissioners extended their gratitude to Texas Veterans Commission staff for all their support and hard work in serving our Texas Veterans.

MOTION: Adjourn.
MADE BY: Commissioner McLeon
SECONDED BY: Secretary Ellzey
ACTION: The motion passed unanimously
Chairman Cantu adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

Minutes Approved by:



Eliseo "Al" Cantu, Jr., Chairman

TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION

2nd Quarterly Commission Meeting

FY 2016 – February 10, 2016

9:00 a.m. – Brazos County Expo, Bryan, Texas

Speakers and Visitors

Morgan Little

Chairman, TX Coalition of Veterans Organizations

John Briedon

Former Texas Veterans Commission Chairman

Bailey Olderog

Committee Clerk, Texas State Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and Military Installations

Jim Darwin

Executive Director, Health and Human Services Commission

Paul Theobald

Committee Director, Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs, Texas House of Representatives